

remote control

Hardware

More than just surround?

Harman/Kardon has brought the same quality it applies to its home stereos into play with its home theatre range – and it shows.



Harman/Kardon AVR5000

MACHINE SPECS

Price	\$1899
Supplied by	Convoy International
Dimensions	440 x 435 x 167mm
Features	dts, Dolby Digital decoders, virtual surround sound, AM/FM tuners, MP3 decoding, digital/analog interface
Outputs/Inputs	RCA, digital (optical and coaxial) component, S-Card.

While Harman/Kardon isn't the most recognisable name in home theatre, the company has a reputation for real excellence and a hardcore group of fans that swear by its quality. Known for its studio-quality CD players and amplifiers, it is only natural that Harman/Kardon's forays into surround-sound AV receivers have been so well received.

The AVR5000 is an audio/visual receiver, but also offers a superior stereo sound that is rich and powerful enough to keep two-channel purists extremely happy. The subtlety of tone, as well as the sheer power of this unit, is surprising, given the usual muddy stereo playback of dedicated AV

receivers. Not many people would be happy about buying a surround-sound system if it meant that they either had to sacrifice the sound quality of their audio system or have two different systems and sets of speakers crowding up their lounge room. With the AVR5000, Harman/Kardon has managed to get high-quality performance out of both applications, which should be welcome news for most audiophiles.

Offers superior stereo sound that is rich and powerful...

Visually, the AVR5000 moves away from the minimal look of Harman/Kardon gear of the past and features a slightly busier look, with handsome-looking buttons on the face and a large, clearly lit display. It is obvious that this is an AV unit, rather than a nondescript black box sitting on the shelf. As far as weight goes, it's not light at 15.9kg, but

most people prefer weighty hardware – idiot logic says the heavier the object, the sturdier it will be. The face of the unit has all of the basic features that you will need to use if you lose the remote; volume, basic EQ and controls for tuning and setting the basic functions. The face also features optical and coaxial digital inputs (handy for the PS2).

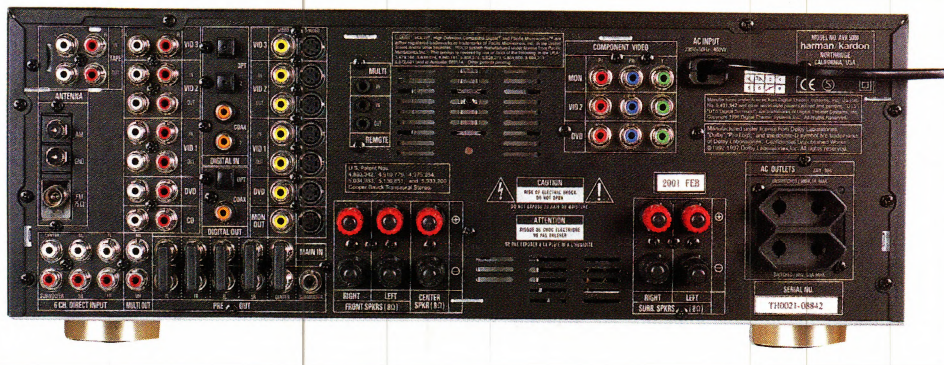
The audio and video connectivity options are comprehensive, even by AV receiver standards, with a full range of inputs and outputs spanning all current options: coaxial and optical digital inputs, composite, S-video and component video sockets, SCART connectors and RCA analog input and output sets. There shouldn't be any bases left uncovered (unless you have prehistoric equipment) and all the options are there for compatibility

BEST BUY

remote control Hardware

ROUND THE BACK

All the outputs and inputs you may need, but can't see in the shop display cabinet.



of gear if you upgrade your DVD player or video.

An added extra is this unit's ability to decode MP3 files, a feature that has so far been mostly relegated to small portable applications. You can plug in an MP3 player directly without losing any quality (in fact, it usually sounds better!). With the arrival of next-generation DVD and CD players (which will be able to read MP3 files burnt onto CD), this will be a valuable tool in keeping up with the Joneses.

As with most high-end AV receivers, the AVR5000 handles all of the current (though constantly evolving) surround-sound formats, including Dolby Digital AC-3 and DTS. It also offers its own version of digital surround, Logic 7C. Although the difference between the different modes is minimal, the Logic 7C mode is a little crisper and more defined than the Dolby Digital and DTS modes. The V-Max virtual-surround mode provides an approximation of multi-speaker surround sound while only using two stereo speakers. While it isn't all that close to the real thing, it sure beats standard stereo for watching movies. The only problem is that you need to be sitting dead-centre in between the speakers for the effect to work.

As far as "guts" go, although the unit only boasts 70 watts-per-channel, it is surprisingly loud, lending weight to the old adage that wattage ratings vary

Remain seated!

So how does the remote shape up?

The slim, tapered (almost wand-like) remote control is surprisingly simple to use, despite looking like a bit of a nightmare to get your head round. It offers both learning capability and a long list of pre-programmed commands, ensuring that, with a bit of trouble, it can be used to control an entire AV system, regardless of the various component brands employed. The owners manual includes codes for almost every other component you can think of to make the remote compatible.



depending on the manufacturer's level of optimism. High-end audio company's wattage ratings almost always seem more realistic (keeping in mind many mini-systems claim to have a 100-watt output – the same wattage as a stadium-rock-style guitar amplifier). The AVR5000 sends a particularly good signal to the sub-woofer, delivering a strong presence without too much "woof" and plenty of punch. Explosions slap and rumble off into the distance beautifully, and the balance between the levels of the satellite speakers and the woofer needed very little adjustment. The centre speaker's signal was also very rich, giving crystal-clear, unmuddied dialogue.

The AVR5000 is one of the most affordable key-pieces of high-end audio that you'll find on the market today, and, with all its outstanding features, it should become the hub for any professional-quality home theatre set-up.

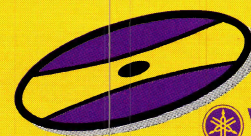
Matt Coyte

THE FINAL VERDICT

Simplicity	7/10
Style	9/10
Features	10/10
Power	9/10
Sound	9/10
Value for money	8/10

Overall

9/10



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Yamaha on: 1800 682 705

ACT

CANBERRA: •Miranda Hi Fi, Canberra
NSW

SYDNEY: •Audio One, Neutral Bay

- Bankstown City Hi Fi, Bankstown
- Cabramatta Hi Fi, Cabramatta
- Eastwood Hi Fi, Eastwood
- Electronic Enterprises, Gordon
- Hi Fi Way, Campbelltown
- Lam Bros, Liverpool
- Len Wallis Audio, Lane Cove
- Neutral Bay Hi Fi, Cremorne
- Quality Hi Fi, Sydney
- Sydney Hi Fi - Brookvale, Castle Hill, Liverpool, Mona Vale, Miranda, Parramatta, Penrith
- The Hi Fi Trader, Newtown
- The Max - Baulkham Hills, Burwood, Rooty Hill
- The Music Room, Paddington

NSW Country:

- Car Radio & Hi Fi, Wagga Wagga
- Godwins Beta Electrical, Forster
- Haberechts Retravision, Albury
- Leading Edge - Ballina, Lismore
- Livewire Audio, Dubbo
- Nowra Hi Fi, Nowra
- Park Beach Music, Coffs Harbour
- Port Macquarie Retravision, Port Macquarie
- Singleton Hi Fi, Singleton
- Springwood Hi Fi, Faulconbridge
- Terry Anderson Hi Fi, Charlestown
- Top End Hi Fi, Wollongong
- Worldwide Appliances - Erina, Tamworth

VIC

MELBOURNE:

- Audio Trends, Wantirna
- Brashs, Preston
- Clive Peeters - Braybrook, Dandenong, Ringwood, Thomastown
- Denman Audio - Bundoora, Dandenong, Melbourne, St Kilda
- Frankston Hi Fi, Frankston
- Inner City Sounds, East Keilor
- Intersound Hi Fi, Balwyn
- Nasonic Hi Fi - Abbotsford, Footscray
- Radio Parts - East Malvern, West Melbourne
- VIC Country:** •Browns Audio Visual, Shepparton
- Chisholm Hi Fi, Horsham
- Prouds Hi Fi, Bendigo
- Sight and Sound, Ballarat
- Steve Bennett Hi Fi, Geelong
- Stothers Music & Hi Fi - Sale, Traralgon
- Teletune, Mildura
- Tomainos Car Audio, Wangaratta

QLD

Brisbane / Gold Coast:

- C L Electronics, Fortitude Valley
- Gold Coast Hi Fi, Southport
- Ipswich Hi Fi, Ipswich
- Living Sound Centre, Newmarket
- Reg Mills Stereo, Buranda
- Sunnybank Hi Fi, Sunnybank
- Todds Hi Fi, Tingalpa
- Toombul Music, Toombul
- QLD Country:** •AV Design, Townsville
- Complete Audio, Maroochydore
- Mackay Stereo Sales - Canelands, Sydney Street
- Noosa Hi Fi, Noosaville
- PK Hi Fi, Caboolture
- Premier Sound, Rockhampton
- Stereo World, Cairns

SA

- Adelaide:** •Challenge Hi Fi, Prospect
- Hi Fi Acoustics, Adelaide
- Revolver Hi Fi, Goodwood
- Truscott Hi Fi - Adelaide, Elizabeth, Hillcrest, Melrose Park, Woodville
- SA Country:** •Aslin Hi Fi, Mt Gambier
- Brian Smyth Hi Fi, Murray Bridge
- Harding & Manning, Whyalla

WA

- Perth:** •Frank Prowse Hi Fi, Mosman Park
- Japan Hi Fi, East Victoria Park
- Morley Hi Fi, Morley
- Sound Advice, Perth
- Surround Sounds - Cannington, Hillarys, Midland, Nedlands
- West Coast Hi Fi, Joondalup
- WA Country:** •Kalgoorlie Audio World, Kalgoorlie
- Nobs Musique, Bunbury
- West Coast Hi Fi - Karratha, Mandurah, Rockingham

NT

- Murray Neck Electric World, Alice Springs
- Sound Spectrum, Darwin

TAS

- Quantum Sound Centre, Hobart